

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Honors Theses, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Honors Program

Spring 4-8-2019

Strategic Audit of the National Football League

Jordan T. Hansen

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/honorstheses>

Part of the [Strategic Management Policy Commons](#)

Hansen, Jordan T., "Strategic Audit of the National Football League" (2019). *Honors Theses, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*. 136.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/honorstheses/136>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses, University of Nebraska-Lincoln by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

A STRATEGIC AUDIT OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of
University Honors Program Requirements
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

By Jordan Hansen,
BS Computer Engineering
College of Engineering

April 8, 2019

Faculty Mentors: Samuel A. Nelson, PhD, Business

Keywords: NFL, National Football League, Strategic Audit, Sports Leagues

Abstract

The NFL (National Football League) is the world's most popular American Football league. The league was formed in 1920, and has managed to survive new entrants to the marketplace, and unstable political situations, to maintain its status as the most watched, and most popular professional sports league in the United States. With revenues each year in excess of \$13 billion, and projected estimates of \$25 Billion in yearly revenue by 2027, the NFL is thriving financially. However, one could argue that the NFL is presented with issues today that it has never faced before, and may be forced to evolve to survive. This essay will offer an overview of the NFL, the forces on it from external sources, and the advantages that the NFL has as a company. It will also dive into some of the issues that the NFL is facing, and how to use its advantages to implement potential solutions to said issues.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
Background	4
Leadership	5
Situational Analysis	5
Competition From Other Leagues and New Entrants	5
Power of Buyers	6
Power of Players	7
Industry Status and Alternative Sports	8
The NFL's Competitive Advantage	8
Political Impact on NFL	8
Economic Impact on NFL	9
Social Impact on NFL	9
Technological Impact on NFL	9
NFL Strengths	10
NFL Weaknesses and Threats	10
Dropping Ratings	10
Taking a Knee	10
CTE	11
Shrinking Player Pool	11
Potential Strategies	12
Goals	12
Increasing Viewership	12
Increasing Player Safety	12
Allowing Players Their Voice	13
Continue to Rake in Money	13
Recommendation for Implementation and Contingency	13
Implementation Plan	13
Backup Plan	14
REFERENCES	14

Background

The NFL is a professional sports league that adjudicates American Football in the United States ("NFL Factbook", 2018). It is the largest professional football league in the World, consisting of 32 teams from across all regions of the United States ("NFL Factbook", 2018). The NFL is the leading professional sports league in revenue, making \$13 billion in 2016. It maintains this lead by a significant margin - the 2nd place league was the MLB (Major League Baseball) bringing in a revenue of \$9.5 billion (Kutz, 2016).

Founded in 1920 in Ohio, the NFL began as a league of 5 football teams and has grown to one of the most stable professional sports leagues in the world, overcoming threats from competitors, and growing their range of products and events ("NFL Factbook", 2018). After joining with their largest competitor, the AFL (American Football League), in the mid-1960s, the NFL began the Super Bowl ("NFL Factbook", 2018). The Super Bowl is often the most watched event on television in any given year, often drawing 100 million or more viewers ("NFL Factbook", 2018).

As a for-profit organization, the NFL pays taxes (Hobson and Harwell, 2015). This was not the case up until 2015 when the NFL dropped tax-exemption status (Hobson and Harwell, 2015). Prior to that point, the NFL was considered a non-profit organization, much to the ire of the public (Hobson and Harwell, 2015). All but one of the teams in the NFL are for-profit and privately owned by individuals or families. The exception is the Green Bay Packers from Green Bay, Wisconsin (Hobson and Harwell, 2015). The Packers are a publicly owned, nonprofit corporation.

The NFL hosts a wide variety of products and events and thus has a wide variety of income streams ("NFL Factbook", 2018). Some of these income streams include allowing companies to sponsor the league, ticket sales for all games (including the Super Bowl, Playoff Games, and Regular/Preseason games), licensing deals for clothing, and advertisements on the NFL website. The NFL also sells streaming passes for games, has a TV network fittingly called The NFL Network, and has Fantasy Football on their website ("NFL Factbook", 2018).

In addition to the corporate products, The NFL has a union for its players called the NFLPA (National Football League Players Association), which was established in 1956 and represents players rights and interests in matters concerning wages, benefits, charitable activities, and public relations ("NFL Players Association", 2019). Overall, the NFL is a complicated company with many working parts. It faces numerous issues from political and public image to player safety. This essay will examine some of those issues that the NFL is currently facing, some issues that are upcoming, and some potential solutions that the NFL could implement today to help alleviate risk.

Leadership

According to a study by the NFLPA, the average NFL team employs around 3,739 people (Maloni, 2011). The league itself was employing 1858 people in 2013 (Kaplan, 2014). According to a 2015 tax return, some of the key employees at the NFL include Roger Goodell (Commissioner), Joseph Siclare (CFO), Jeff Pash (EVP & Gen. Counsel), and Troy Vincent (EVP of Football Operations) ("NFL Tax Return", 2015). Unfortunately, the NFL is very tight-lipped when it comes to its organizational structure, and much of this information is not public since the non-profit filing from 2015 ("NFL Tax Return", 2015). It is well known that Goodell is in charge of the league as its commissioner, and represents the NFL in most public settings. Further research suggests that the NFL has a Chief Operating Officer, Chief Content Officer, and Chief Medical Officer in addition to the aforementioned executives ("NFL Tax Return", 2015). It is questionable if the leadership at the NFL is as ethical as one would hope. Goodell is often criticized by the press and the public but has shown results financially, more than double the league's revenue from \$6.5 Billion in 2005 to \$13 Billion in 2016, with projections to be \$25 Billion in 2027 (McFarlane, 2019).

Situational Analysis

Competition From Other Leagues and New Entrants

Professional football has had many new entrants to the marketplace since the NFL was first founded in 1920. Some notable entrants include the AFFL (American Flag Football League), FFL (Freedom Football League), XFL, CFL (Canadian Football League) and the AAF (Alliance of American Football) (Curtis, 2018). None of these leagues have had the staying power or generated the revenue that the NFL does.

The AAF, which began play in early 2019, did not even attempt to compete against the NFL. Instead, they opted to begin their season the week after the Super Bowl, meaning that the NFL was done with their season before AAF play began (Curtis, 2018). The AAF had some games broadcast on the NFL Network for some games but was not able to stay alive ("Alliance of American Football", Curtis). The AAF played eight of the ten planned weeks, before halting all football operations due to lack of funds ("Alliance of American Football").

The XFL is a professional sports league founded by Vince McMahon of WWE fame ("Extreme Football League", 2019). It had previously run one season in 2001 before closing its doors. It will be returning in 2020, whether it will have better luck the second time is yet to be determined. The XFL does not plan to hold games during the NFL season, but like the AAF play the games after the NFL season has ended (Curtis, 2018).

The FFL has not begun play yet (Curtis, 2018). The CFL's primary market is in Canada and is able to somewhat co-exist with the NFL (Curtis, 2018). The AAFL is not full contact football and also has been broadcast on the NFL Network, leaving questions of if the NFL views the AAFL as a direct competitor (Curtis, 2018).

Overall, it is difficult to believe that the NFL will have to struggle to maintain a lead over competitors. Considering its most credible competition in the past ten years did not make the choice to play during the same time as the NFL, it is likely everyone has learned their lesson. The chance that a new company will come into the marketplace of professional football is somewhat high, but the NFL will likely be able to put out any serious threats.

Power of Buyers



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Follow



Wow, NFL first game ratings are way down over an already really bad last year comparison. Viewership declined 13%, the lowest in over a decade. If the players stood proudly for our Flag and Anthem, and it is all shown on broadcast, maybe ratings could come back? Otherwise worse!

7:42 AM - 9 Sep 2018

The NFL is in a peculiar place due to players and fans both having different interests and desires from the product. Some, such as US President Donald Trump, have suggested that fan interest in NFL is plummeting due to the NFL's allowance of players such as Colin Kaepernick to kneel during the national anthem. A BBC piece refutes this claim, offering an explanation that NFL interest is as high as ever, and viewership decline is from a shift in how viewers get TV rather than how they feel about players taking a knee ("NFL and Nike", 2018).

NFL viewership was down in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 seasons but rebounded in the 2018-2019 season (Pallotta, 2019). Viewership and fan perception of the NFL obviously has some impact on how well the NFL is doing. However, there is an argument to be made that the NFL could get away with quite a few bad decisions before it would really hurt their bottom line significantly. As some sports writers have put it, the NFL "knows you're an addict" (Nagel, 2016). Even though the NFL (or its players), may make some decisions fans do not agree with, they are given the options of either not watching football, or accepting the change and moving on (Nagel, 2016).

One could argue that media companies are also buyers of the NFL, as they are the ones who pay the money to broadcast the games on their stations. However, the power of these companies, even huge conglomerates like Comcast, seems to be limited (Fainaru-Wada, 2019). This was shown when Comcast was forced to fire Bob Costas, one of NBC's leading sportscasters after he called out the NFL for not doing enough to prevent concussions and other injuries during games (Fainaru-Wada, 2019). Bob Costas had been an employee with NBC's Sports division for nearly 40 years, working on everything from Boxing to Golf, to Nascar and the Olympics (Fainaru-Wada, 2019). NBC was forced to let him go, in an effort to improve their chances of TV deals with the league (Fainaru-Wada, 2019). The NFL currently makes \$7 billion a year on broadcast deals, and that number is expected to grow to \$17 by 2027, suggesting that the bargaining power of buyers is not going to improve (Fainaru-Wada, 2019).

Power of Players

The NFL's main supplier is its talent. If there are no players, the NFL cannot have games. The previously mentioned NFLPA has proven to be a thorn in the side of the NFL in the past. In 2011, a lockout lasted 132 days, before ultimately being resolved (Stites, 2017). During these lockouts, there is a risk that if the parties cannot come to an agreement (usually over collective bargaining), the league may be forced to cancel portions of a season or even a whole season (Stites, 2017). This would obviously be a significant financial hit for the NFL. However, unfortunately for the players of the league, and to the fortune of the NFL, players are notorious for not making smart financial decisions (Stites, 2017). In previous lockouts, the NFL has "won" the battles by waiting for players to run out of money (Stites, 2017). Despite the ethical concerns this raises for the NFL, players are forced to come back, and this allows the NFL to continue the season as planned, preventing loss of revenue.

Industry Status and Alternative Sports

Football has been the favorite sport to watch in the United States since the mid-1960s. It is safe to say that the football industry is well flushed out and in a mature stage. However, there is little competition in the marketplace due to the size of the NFL. College Football is an alternative to Pro Football but plays on primarily Saturdays, versus the NFL's Sunday, Thursday, and Monday game times. It is unlikely that another sport will disrupt the NFL's ability to make money, as it hasn't happened in the past 60 years. Football is the most popular sport by far in the nation by a margin of 26%, and the next closest sports have not been closing the gap. Additionally, football season is in a different time of the year from most other major sports, meaning that alternative sports are not really a threat to the NFL's bottom line.

The NFL's Competitive Advantage

The NFL has very favorable access to resources. From a player point of view, kids that play football from a young age dream of playing in the NFL someday. Given that it is the largest and most league in the world for football, in this case, success has created more success. As long as the NFL continues to bring in the best players, it is unlikely that another league will be able to overtake them (Renzulli, 2019). The chances that the NFL loses its ability to recruit high caliber personnel is low as well given the amount of money that the NFL is able to pay players (Renzulli, 2019). Additionally, it is also unlikely that the teams would desire to leave the NFL, as the NFL distributes money to teams, in 2017 it was in excess of 8 billion distributed among the 32 teams ("Report: NFL...", 2018).

Political Impact on NFL



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump

Follow



Why is the NFL getting massive tax breaks while at the same time disrespecting our Anthem, Flag and Country? Change tax law!

3:13 AM - 10 Oct 2017

As we went into earlier, the NFL has felt political pressure from President Trump, and other fans who feel that players should be required to stand during the national anthem. Additionally, the NFL felt political pressure when it dropped its tax-exempt status in 2015 (Hobson and Harwell, 2015). Trump has further threatened the NFL, stating that he desired a change of tax law to prevent the NFL from getting tax breaks (Trump, 2017). However, as mentioned before, this political pressure has not created an issue with generating revenue for the NFL at this time.

Economic Impact on NFL

In the United States, football seems to be somewhat of an inelastic good. In the late 2000's recession in the United States, NFL revenue growths did not slow down compared to previous years ("NFL Revenue...", 2018). However, it is worth noting that attendance figures fell during this time ("NFL Attendance", 2019). This suggests that the NFL is somewhat protected from economic instability, but could suffer some loss of revenue if a significant economic downturn occurred. It seems likely though that the NFL would not suffer quite the same impact that many companies feel during financial recessions.

Social Impact on NFL

It is quite difficult to overstate how popular the NFL is in the United States. The Super Bowl is considered a huge social event, arguably the biggest TV event of any given year (Peralta, 2015). From the commercials to the halftime show, to the actual game, the Super Bowl is a huge moneymaker for the league and garners a major following. In fact, the Super Bowl holds seven of the top eight most-watched television event of all time (Peralta, 2015).

Technological Impact on NFL

Technology is potentially the area where there is the opportunity for most impact at the NFL's bottom line. There has been a huge shift in the United States from watching television through a cable or satellite provider, to watching television using streaming services (Morris, 2018). Today, thousands of viewers are dropping their conventional television providers to use cheaper, often non-contract streaming services (Morris, 2018). This has huge potential to either help the NFL make more money or hurt the NFL's bottom line. Deals with Amazon for streaming "Thursday Night Football" games to viewers is a step in the right direction for the NFL ("Wagner, 2017"). Offering Gamepass, a streaming service to allow viewers to watch all games on any given weekend, and other subscription services that allow users to watch games is another right step ("Ways to Watch...", 2019). It is also important the NFL keeps in mind the easy ability for users to stream games illegally online, and do their best to prevent this from happening. A simple Google search for "free illegal NFL streams" yields over 15 million results. Reddit's "NFLStreams" subreddit, a well-known place to find bootlegged streams, offers streams of all games, every week of the season ("r/nflstreams", 2019).

NFL Strengths

The NFL has many strengths contributing to its business status that one could argue is a monopoly. Many of these have been previously mentioned, but they are listed here again. The NFL's large amount of revenue it pulls in every year is a huge asset. Players want to play in the NFL because it is the most lucrative, and highest caliber league. This trend continues in a circle because in this case, success breeds success. The NFL's social popularity allows it to continue to sign lucrative TV contracts, sell merchandise easily, and find sponsors.

NFL Weaknesses and Threats

To examine how the NFL could improve strategically, it is first important to view the threats the NFL faces.

Dropping Ratings

In the past few years, the NFL has faced dropping ratings ("Super Bowl LIII...", 2019). As previously mentioned, this has not significantly hurt the NFL's ability to make absurd amounts of money. However, it is important for the health of the league that they continue to grow their viewer base. The 2019 Super Bowl was the lowest-rated Super Bowl since 2008, with 98.2 million viewers ("Super Bowl LIII...", 2019). This is likely due to a few reasons. First of all, the 2019 game was widely considered very boring ("Super Bowl LIII...", 2019). The halftime show was almost universally disliked ("Super Bowl LIII...", 2019). The commercials of 2019 were not up to par for a typical Super Bowl. However, potentially most importantly, 2.6 million viewers streamed the game online but were not counted in the 98.2 million figure ("Super Bowl LIII...", 2019). Even adding in streaming viewers, the game still slipped a couple of million viewers compared to previous years. As previously mentioned, the NFL had suffered a couple of years of rating declines, before a slight rebound in 2019. While not an existential threat to the NFL, this area may be cause for some concern. It may be time for the NFL to make adjustments to help increase their viewer numbers. Some potential ways to do this will be discussed later in the essay.

Taking a Knee

Another threat to the NFL is outside of politics and public relations. Players taking a knee in protest of police brutality has been widely regarded as public relations nightmare for the NFL ("NFL Teams...", 2018). The NFL has a history of fining players for taking actions based on causes they care about. The NFL famously fined Odell Beckham Jr. \$18000 for wearing cleats in support of cancer research in honor of the late sports reporter Craig Sager (Wilson, 2016). This was done without prior warning to Beckham that he needed to remove his shoes (Wilson, 2016). Close to the same time, Ezekiel Elliott was not fined for jumping into an oversized Salvation Army Red Kettle after scoring (Wilson, 2016). This action drew a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct which typically results in a fine (Wilson, 2016). This drew anger from fans and players, calling out the NFL for what they called "double standards," and the NFL trying to prevent players from advocating for causes the players and fans care about.

Given the number of viewers and players associated with the NFL, there are going to be widely differing viewpoints among its stakeholders. One could consider the NFL's inability to handle public relations regarding the political and ethical opinions of its players a weakness. Some ways to help the NFL curb this will be discussed later in this essay.

CTE

One of the most important questions the NFL faces today is how it should handle concussions in the league, and playing football's link to the brain condition known as Chronic traumatic encephalopathy or CTE for short. According to Boston University, CTE is a progressive brain disease. CTE is believed to be caused by repeated blows to the head and is commonly found in football athletes. CTE was discovered in the 1920s in boxers.

Player safety is of tremendous importance for the NFL, and there are questions of if the NFL has done enough to ensure that players do not suffer long term damage from their short time in the league ("Claims in NFL...", 2018). It is estimated that the NFL will pay close to \$1.4 billion in a 2018 settlement to former players of the league who develop "Lou Gehrig's disease, dementia, or other neurological problems, [...] caused by concussions ("Claims in NFL...", 2018)"

Ultimately, ten percent of one year's revenue paid out to former players over the course of 5-10 years, while a heavy sum, will not be enough to bankrupt the NFL ("Claims in NFL...", 2018). Player safety is obviously a significant weakness to the NFL, and moreover, the sport of football as a whole. However, this issue goes beyond the financials of the NFL, and into their talent pool.

Shrinking Player Pool

Perhaps the most dangerous threat that the NFL is the shrinking number of kids playing football in high school. High caliber NFL players often begin as high caliber players in high school (Hummer, 2018). However, with some questioning, if it is even ethical to watch football given its link to severe health risk to players, it is obvious that some parents will not allow their kids to play in high school (Finney, 2017). In fact, from 2009 to 2017, there was a seven percent drop in high school football participants ("Fewer kids...", 2018). A more alarming trend is that tackle football competitors are down to 5.22 million in 2017 from 8.4 million in 2006 ("Tackle Football...", 2018). Given that 21 percent of high school players exhibit CTE, it is likely that as awareness of CTE and concussion risks continue to rise, the number of high school participants, and therefore the NFL's talent pool will continue to shrink (Moran, 2017).

Potential Strategies

Goals

To alleviate the NFL's weaknesses, and mitigate risk for the league, there are some steps that the NFL can take, from an in-game standpoint, public relations standpoint, and from an

administrative standpoint. Goals for these strategies should include growing their viewer base. It should also include helping alleviate concerns about player safety, by actually increasing player safety. Additionally, the league needs to eliminate double standards regarding causes the players care about, and strike a chord of being supportive of players, while also not hurting the league's interests or viewership.

Increasing Viewership

There are a couple of ways the NFL can improve viewership numbers. The NFL saw a slight bump in ratings in the 2018-2019 season, some believe this to be a result of more exciting games (Super Bowl aside) (Adgate, 2018). Some of the best-rated games of the season happened to be the highest scoring games (Adgate, 2018). The NFL rules committee meets in mid-spring to go over rules, and at this point, it is likely too late to implement new rules for the 2019-2020 season ("NFL Operations", 2019). However, the NFL has established rules preventing helmet-to-helmet hits, which has slowed down defenses and helped offenses score more points. More investigation and enactment of rules that would increase scoring would likely help the NFL increase ratings ("NFL Scoring...", 2018).

Alternatively, the NFL could generate additional viewers by expanding globally. The NFL has attempted to expand by having games in Mexico and London in recent years, and this is a good way to grow viewer numbers abroad (Gardiner, 2016). Increase in overseas games, an investigation into an outside-the-US based football team would be a good start. Potential candidates would likely only include Mexico and Canada to start, but this would help grow the NFL's base outside of the US.

Increasing Player Safety

Player safety should be priority number one to the NFL. As mentioned earlier, the rules committee has a lot of power in the NFL, and this power could go a long way to increase player safety. A study by the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine states that one of the easiest ways to help player safety would be to change kickoff rules or potentially eliminate kickoffs altogether (ScienceDaily, 2018). The NFL increasing its funding to health research and continue to implement rules to increase head safety should go a long way as well. The NFL has created rules in the past to help in this area, but ultimately this is an area where the NFL still has a ways to go ("New NFL...", 2012). Increasing the pace of improvement in this area would be a positive move for the NFL.

Allowing Players Their Voice

Allowing players to advocate for causes they care about would be a good public relations move for the NFL. The NFL holds a Pro Bowl in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl every year. It is a chance for the best players not in the Super Bowl to showcase their talents, playing against other high caliber players (Tolj, 2017). Currently, not many people care about the Pro Bowl (Tolj,

2017). One way the NFL could help players advocate for causes they care about would be to have the Pro Bowl be a contest in which the winning team gets a bonus that they will use to donate to a charity they care about. The losing team would also get a certain amount of money, but it would be less. The NFL could use it as a time to have featured charities and spread awareness on the charities that the players choose. While this idea is fairly unlikely, it is a good way for the NFL to support players, support player causes, and make the Pro Bowl mean something to the players, and the fans.

Continue to Rake in Money

Ultimately, given its monopolistic standing, the NFL could easily not make any strategy changes and likely be fine. High caliber athletes will continue to dream of playing in the NFL, fans will continue watching, and the NFL will continue to generate revenues that other leagues would only dream of.

Recommendation for Implementation and Contingency

Implementation Plan

As previously mentioned, rule committee meetings have come and past for the 2019-2020 season. Any implementation of these would need to take place for the 2020-2021 season. It would be highly recommended to implement rules that increase the number of exciting moments in games and to implement rules that safety of players. While further global expansion and the Pro Bowl charity plan may be viable strategies, they also have associated cost, and are not as likely to result in positive results for the NFL.

Backup Plan

For the recommendation, implementing rules changes to increase exciting moments and increase the safety of players, there is an obvious backup plan. If the plan does not work, the NFL can easily tweak or remove the rules the next year. Ultimately, the NFL is in a good position from a strategic point of view because if it falls back and does nothing as its backup plan, it will still likely continue to make money, and be fine well into the future.

REFERENCES

- Adgate, B. (2018, November 26). NFL Scoring Is Up, And So Are Ratings. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2018/11/26/nfl-scoring-is-up-and-so-are-ratings/#7f24328776cd>
- Alliance of American Football. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://aaf.com/>
- Claims in NFL concussion settlement hit \$500 million in less than 2 years. (2018, July 30). Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nfl-concussion-claims-hit-500-million-less-than-2-years/>
- Curtis, C. (2018, December 11). A handy guide to the alternative football leagues challenging the NFL. Retrieved from <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2018/12/what-is-aaf-affl-ffl-xfl-nfl-competitors-rule-changes-starting-dates>
- Extreme Football League. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Extreme-Football-League>
- Fainaru-Wada, M. (2019, February 10). Bob Costas, unplugged: From NBC and broadcast icon to dropped from the Super Bowl. Retrieved from http://www.espn.com/espn/otl/story/_/id/25914913/inside-story-how-legendary-nfl-broadcaster-bob-costas-ended-excised-football-nbc-espn

Finney, D. P. (2017, August 05). Is it ethical to watch football in light of concussion syndrome revelations? Retrieved from <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/local/columnists/daniel-finney/2017/08/05/football-ethical-watch-light-concussion-revelations/541065001/>

Gardiner, B. (2016, January 06). Inside the NFL's Quest to Build a Truly Global League. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/2016/01/inside-the-nfls-quest-to-build-a-truly-global-league/>

Harwell, D., & Hobson, W. (2015, April 28). The NFL is dropping its tax-exempt status. Why that ends up helping them out. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2015/04/28/the-nfl-is-dropping-its-tax-exempt-status-why-that-ends-up-helping-them-out/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.5c63af97c217

How can we reduce concussions in football? Change kickoffs, experts say. (2018, October 01). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/10/181001114220.htm>

Hummer, C. (2018, April 30). How recruiting rankings fare projecting future NFL Draft picks. Retrieved from <https://247sports.com/Article/NFL-Draft-recruiting-rankings-go-hand-in-hand--117819292/>

Kaplan, D., & February 24, 2. (n.d.). NFL expands staff by 20 percent in a year. Retrieved

from

<https://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2014/02/24/Leagues-and-Governing-Bodies/NFL-staff.aspx>

Kaplan, D., & February 24, 2. (n.d.). NFL expands staff by 20 percent in a year. Retrieved

from

<https://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2014/02/24/Leagues-and-Governing-Bodies/NFL-staff.aspx>

Kutz, S. (2016, July 02). NFL took in \$13 billion in revenue last season - see how it stacks up against other pro sports leagues. Retrieved from

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-nfl-made-13-billion-last-season-see-how-it-stacks-up-against-other-leagues-2016-07-01>

Maloni, J. (2011, June 20). NFL lockout takes toll on the American economy. Retrieved from

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-league/post/nfl-lockout-takes-toll-on-the-american-economy/2010/12/20/AG07gycH_blog.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ecf661a25e8

- McFarlane, G. (2019, March 12). How The NFL Makes Money. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/062515/how-nfl-makes-money.asp>
- Moran, B. (2017). BU Researchers Find CTE in 99% of Former NFL Players Studied. Retrieved from <https://www.bu.edu/research/articles/cte-former-nfl-players/>
- Morris, D. (2018, April 29). Viewers Are Ditching Cable For Streaming Faster Than Anyone Expected. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2018/04/29/viewers-cable-streaming/>
- Nagel, E. (2016, January 13). The NFL Doesn't Care About You. Retrieved from <https://www.turfshowtimes.com/2016/1/12/10758070/nfl-relocation-los-angeles-st-louis-rams-san-diego-chargers-oakland-raiders>
- New NFL rules designed to limit head injuries. (2012, July 26). Retrieved from <http://www.nfl.com/news/story/09000d5d81990bdf/article/new-nfl-rules-designed-to-limit-head-injuries>
- NFL Attendance. (2019). Retrieved from <http://www.espn.com/nfl/attendance>
- NFL and Nike: Are protests hurting the game's ratings? (2018, September 10). Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-45471429>
- NFL Factbook. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.nfl.com/static/content/public/photo/2018/08/09/0ap3000000946101.pdf>

NFL revenue 2001-2017 | Statistic. (2018). Retrieved from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/193457/total-league-revenue-of-the-nfl-since-2005/>

NFL scoring is at a record pace this season, but what's the reason? (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://sports.yahoo.com/nfl-scoring-record-pace-season-whats-reason-160959873.html>

NFL Tax Return. (2015). Retrieved from

http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990_pdf_archive/131/131922622/131922622_201506_9900.pdf

NFL teams to be fined if players kneel during anthem. (2018, May 23). Retrieved from

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44230772>

Pallotta, F. (2019, January 03). NFL ratings rebound after two seasons of declining viewership. Retrieved from

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/03/media/nfl-ratings-2018-season/index.html>

Peralta, E. (2015, February 02). Super Bowl XLIX Was Most Watched Show In TV History.

Retrieved from

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/02/02/383352809/super-bowl-xlix-was-most-watched-show-in-tv-history>

R/nflstreams. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.reddit.com/r/nflstreams>

Renzulli, K. A. (2019, February 04). Here's what the average NFL player makes in a season.

Retrieved from

<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/01/heres-what-the-average-nfl-players-makes-in-a-season.html>

Report: NFL teams' revenue share topped \$8 billion in 2017. (2018, July 18). Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/football-nfl-gb-nfl-revenues/report-nfl-teams-revenue-share-topped-8-billion-in-2017-idUSKBN1K719F>

Stites, A. (2017, May 30). NFLPA is warning players to start saving money now for a 2021 lockout. Retrieved from <https://www.sbnation.com/2017/5/30/15712404/nflpa-cba-nfl-lockout-2021-leverage-negotiations>

Super Bowl LIII Was a Disappointment for TV Ratings. (2019). Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2019/02/05/super-bowl-ratings/>

Tackle football: Number of participants U.S. 2018 | Statistic. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/191658/participants-in-tackle-football-in-the-us-since-2006/>

The NFL Competition Committee. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://operations.nfl.com/football-ops/league-governance/the-nfl-competition-committee/>

The NFL Players Association. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.nflpa.com/about>

TodayShow. (2018). Fewer kids playing high school football as interest drops, health worries rise. Retrieved from
<https://www.today.com/health/high-school-football-fewer-kids-play-students-try-other-sports-t136288>

Tolj, J. (2017, October 02). 10 Reasons Nobody Cares About the NFL Pro Bowl. Retrieved from
<https://bleacherreport.com/articles/1037607-10-reasons-nobody-cares-about-the-nfl-pro-bowl>

Trump, D. J. (2017, October 10). Why is the NFL getting massive tax breaks while at the same time disrespecting our Anthem, Flag and Country? Change tax law! Retrieved from
<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/917694644481413120>

Wagner, K. (2017, May 01). How the NFL juggles the future of streaming, the decline of TV, and billions of dollars. Retrieved from
<https://www.recode.net/2017/5/1/15386694/nfl-live-stream-amazon-prime-thursday-night-football-ratings>

Ways to Watch the NFL | TV, Streaming & Radio. (2019). Retrieved from
<https://www.nfl.com/ways-to-watch>

Wilson, R. (2016, December 22). Double standard? Odell Beckham claims NFL fined him for Craig Sager cleats. Retrieved from

<https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/double-standard-odell-beckham-claims-nfl-fined-him-for-craig-sager-cleats/>